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Production from the Bakken Formation was established in 1953 when Stanolid Oil and Gas Corp. drilled and completed the #1 Woodrow Starr (SWSE Sec. 21, T.152N., R.94W.) in Antelope field. Producing wells within Antelope field perforate portions of the Bakken Formation or the localized "Sanish Sand" found at the top of the Three Forks Formation or both. Production is independent of lithology; the well may be a good producer regardless of the presence of the "Sanish Sand."

The Bakken Formation was not considered to be a primary target because it is generally impermeable, and produces primarily from natural fractures. Following the initial discovery, development for Bakken oil proceeded slowly. The next discovery occurred in 1961, when Shell Oil Company-#41X-5-1 Government (NENE Sec. 5, T. 143N., R. 101W.) was drilled as a Ordovician Red River test when a drill stem test recovered oil from the Bakken. The well was subsequently completed in the Bakken and tested 136 BOPD with a trace of water. The well flowed an average of 50 BOPD until 1964, when it was plugged and abandoned due to a collapsed casing. No further development for Bakken oil in Elkhorn Ranch field occurred until February 1977 when Gulf Oil Corporation completed the #1-5 Gulf Sunbehm USA (NWNW Sec. 5, T.143N.,R.101W.).

The late 1970's was an active period for Bakken development. At this time, interest was directed towards the depositional limit of the Bakken Formation in southwestern North Dakota. Reservoirs developed in this area were known for having high pressures, producing little or no water and having gradual decline rates. Attention was given toward this area again in 1987, when Meridian Oil, Inc. drilled and completed the first horizontal hole in the Upper Bakken shale in Billings County.

The Bakken Formation produces or has produced from 50 fields; 34 of these fields are still producing. A total of 19,623,036 barrels of oil have

been produced to date (Sept. 1989); 78% of the oil has come from three fields (Antelope, Elkhorn Ranch, and Buckhorn). Bakken production is increasing again as a result of the new horizontal play. Horizontal wells produced an average of 151 BOPD of the new horizontal play. Production from the newly completed wells was responsible for 40% of the oil produced from the Bakken for the first nine months in 1989.